



FIG. 24.—ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPTER-HOUSE, BRISTOL.

commenced by Henry de Blois, brother of King Stephen, about 1136. The Hospital of St. Cross, the "alma-house of noble poverty," which stands about a mile from the city, retains more fully its ancient appearance and customs than any similar establishment in the kingdom. The brethren, with their black gown and metal cross on the left breast, the dining-hall with the old "black jacks" for ale, and other implements given by Cardinal Beaufort; the quiet cloister, the ancient church embowered by trees, and the pretty residences of the brethren around it, serve to take back the mind to a much earlier period in our history, and suggest that in a rude and violent age the monastery—which St. Cross, though never so used (being simply a hospital and a refuge), closely resembles—must have offered strong attractions to all studious or timid men, who were unwilling or unfitted to encounter in the world the more boisterous spirits of the time.

Originally, besides the resident brethren, 100 miscellaneous poor were fed daily in what was called, in consequence, "Hundred Menne's Hall," but is now a brewhouse. At the present time all who apply at the gatehouse may receive a horn of beer and slice of bread,—that is until two gallons, the day's allowance, have been expended; nor are the applicants for this few.

An American writer, who visited the hospital a short time ago, has pointed out to his countrymen this adherence to a bequest during many centuries, as a wonderful instance of integrity and faithkeeping, honourable to England. It may be a question, nevertheless, whether the spirit of the bequest is followed out as it should be. You may remember friend H—'s eloquent denunciation of the sour beer and dry bread which he found there, and my own experience is to much the same effect. The church has acquired considerable notoriety from the circumstance that Dr. Milner, following a suggestion thrown out by the Rev. J. Bentham,* has appealed to the interlaced semicircular arches in the choir, where pierced

for light, as being probably the first open pointed arches in Europe. If you look at fig. 23 you will understand what he meant. The precise origin of the pointed style of architecture is still as doubtful as it was before the appearance of any of the numerous dissertations to which it has given rise. Nevertheless, the inquiry cannot be deemed useless: as, in the pursuit of the philosopher's stone and *elixir vite*, the enthusiastic student of alchemy discovered many new substances and enlarged the science of chemistry; so, in the pursuit of the origin of the pointed style of architecture, much valuable information has been gathered.

Whichever theory may be the most correct, it is certainly not that deduced from the intersecting arches at St. Cross. Apart from less obvious objections to any deduction founded on the present appearance of this arcade, the main arches in the choir, below it, are pointed, as, too, is the vaulting of the aisles; by which we must be led to believe either that considerable alteration was made in the choir at a later period, when the practice of the Pointed style was more advanced, and which might have extended to the interlaced arches in question, or that the date of its original construction is somewhat more recent than that usually assigned to it. Moreover, other structures in England, the date of which is asserted to be even anterior to that of St. Cross, as, for example, Buildwas Abbey, display likewise an intermixture of pointed and circular arches. The circumstances, however, which occurred in many cases to delay ecclesiastical buildings for years after the recorded date of their foundation, and the difficulty of detecting alterations and reconstructions made at a remote period, prevent us from arriving with any certainty at a satisfactory conclusion.

There have been many theories of the origin of the Pointed style:—Bishop Warburton maintained that it proceeded from the imitation of groves of trees; that they erected buildings,

"The arcades of an alleys walk
To emulate in stone."

St. Cross is a facing of six wide round interlaced arches by way of ornament to a flat vaulted space; only so much of it as lies between the legs of the two neighbouring arches, where they cross each other, is pierced through the fabric, and forms a little range of sharp-pointed windows: it is of King's Stephen's time; whether they were originally pierced I cannot learn.

Sir James Hall said, from wicker-work; one from the section of the Ark—giving it a Hebrew origin; and another, from the Pyramids! Sir Christopher Wren was of opinion that it came from the Saracens; and many think with him. Others show that the vaulting produced it. Some give it to the English, some to the French, some to the Germans. The pointed arch is not the pointed style, although it is a very important and characteristic portion of it. Pointed arches are of very early date: the form is to be found in those very primitive structures I spoke of, where the covering is made by the gradual overlapping of stones, as in the Treasury of Atreus. Pointed arches are found in the buildings of the Saracens, in Sicily, for example, from the ninth to the eleventh century; and M. Hittorf, in his beautiful work on the buildings of that country, endeavours to find there the origin of the style. The Normans visited Sicily in 1061, and entirely conquered it in 1089. All the buildings erected by the Normans there between 1071 and 1155 were copied from the Saracenic pointed-arched buildings. All these structures give evidence, in the richness of the mosaics, and the paintings which cover the walls, of the employment of Greek (Byzantine) artists, who, having emigrated, formed then a part of the population of Sicily, and had preserved the superiority in art which their ancestors possessed in so high a degree.

The walls of many of the Norman buildings in England were covered with paintings, betraying the influence of this Byzantine school.

We have seen that colours were used by all the early nations in the decoration of their buildings. In the Byzantine churches the system was pursued to a great extent, and afterwards obtained wherever the Greek church prevailed.

The Saxon church of St. Andrew, at Hexham (founded 674) was profusely polychromatized. Prior Richard, who wrote about the end of the twelfth century, says "the arch of the sanctuary was decorated with historical representations, imagery and various figures in relief, carved in stone, and painted with a most agreeable variety of colours." St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, after restoration by Edward III. presented a striking example of the extent to which colours and gilding were employed in decoration at that period. At the time of the Reformation, all the coloured adornments of our churches were whitewashed over, or otherwise obliterated. The whitewash has served in many cases to preserve that which it seemed to destroy: every day brings to light on the walls of our village churches interesting examples of such decorations.

At a time when few persons comparatively could read, pictorial representations of the principal events recorded in the Scriptures were valuable as a means of instruction, and were, consequently, put up in every available position.

There is at this time a disposition to introduce paintings into churches, and certainly means of encouraging the higher branches of art are much needed. About seventy years ago Sir Joshua Reynolds, West, Barry, Dance, Cipriani, and Angelica Kauffman offered to adorn the interior of St. Paul's Cathedral with paintings, with the view of convincing the public of the improvement in our sacred buildings which might be effected by this means, and so of obtaining an opening for the encouragement of British art. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London could not be induced to entertain the proposition, on the ground that it savoured of Popery, and the idea was abandoned in consequence. A similar offer at this time would probably be better received. I am sure I need not urge upon you that all are interested in advancing the fine arts. Apart from their great general power over mind and manners,—by the warrior and the statesman, they are seen to be the means of perpetuating worthy their deeds and memory; by the author, the only expounder of his ideas with universal significance; and by the Christian, the most powerful illustrator and exponent of the truth. As affecting our commercial relations, too, the promotion of taste is nationally important. Improvement in this

* Bentham says, in his "History of Ely Cathedral Church, 1771," "When speaking of the origin of pointed arches:—'Some have imagined they might possibly have taken their rise from those arcades we see in the Early Norman and Saxon buildings on walls, where the wide semicircular arches cross and intersect each other, and form thereby, at their intersection, exactly a narrow and sharp-pointed arch. In the wall south of the choir at St.